

## **2000 Annual Report Executive Summary**

### **Josephine County Enterprise Community**

Executive Summary, IVCRT: In 2000, the Illinois Valley Community Response Team (IVCRT) was able to score a number of successes in the ongoing economic and community development of the Illinois Valley. As in previous years, the organization's activities covered a wide range including infrastructure improvements, business development, educational programs, and initiatives to enhance the area's quality of life. All in all, the IVCRT supported more than 20 projects and initiatives during 2000, either directly through funding or indirectly through lending of volunteer and staff support for project development and coordination.

Among ongoing programs, the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund Program stands out as the most notable achievement in 2000. This program was established in the fall of 1999 with the purpose of providing venture capital for business start-up and expansion to individuals and businesses that have a solid business plan but are unable to obtain conventional financing. Loan sizes range from several hundred dollars to a current maximum of \$10,000. In 2000, the IVCRT was able to double the loan fund's capitalization from \$40,000 to \$80,000 through a Rural Business Enterprise Grant. Given the continuing strong community demand for this program, the IVCRT is planning to seek additional funding for the loan program.

Job retention and expansion was also at the heart of a continuing partnership between the IVCRT and two leading business support organizations in southern Oregon: Southern Oregon Regional Development, Inc. and Southern Oregon Women's Access to Credit, Inc. As a result of this partnership, 45 new jobs were created and 57 jobs retained in the Illinois Valley, in 2000. Both organizations assisted entrepreneurs and established business owners in evaluating the feasibility of their existing business or business ideas, and provided advice on a wide range of issues such as business plan development, financing, accounting, and marketing.

Last year, the IVCRT undertook an ambitious initiative to upgrade and expand the Community Education computer lab. The IVCRT was successful in obtaining funding that financed the installation of a new server, switches and networking equipment, and the purchase of software, a color laser printer and 28 advanced computers for the high school's computer lab.

Another area where the IVCRT made significant progress in 2000 was the ongoing development of the Illinois Valley's tourism economy. Building on a comprehensive sustainable tourism development action plan that was developed in 1999, several tourism development projects were undertaken.

One such project is the ongoing redevelopment of downtown Cave Junction. Last spring, the community came together to develop a vision for redevelopment and generated a list of desired improvements for downtown. Importantly, efforts to redevelop downtown Cave Junction are closely linked to attempts to develop the Illinois River Forks State Park just south of Cave Junction into a park with overnight facilities. Visitors staying at the State Park could access downtown Cave Junction on foot or by bike, and browse and shop in the downtown area creating significant economic spin-off effects. A related tourism development effort involved a countywide coalition to create and implement an area-wide tourism-marketing plan.

The year 2000 proved to be equally successful with regard to continuing efforts to involve the community in IVCRT economic and community development activities. Not only did more community members volunteer their time and energy in project development and implementation than in previous

years, but the IVCRT also saw its general membership more than double during 2000. Moreover, with the election of six new board directors by IVCRT general members in January 2000, the organization's board became even more diverse and representative of the community's diverse interests and perspectives than in the past.

Given these positive developments, the IVCRT feels that there continues to be strong local support for the Empowerment Initiative and is excited about the good prospects for advancing the long-term wellbeing of Illinois Valley residents in 2001.

Executive Summary, SWCRT: The Sunny Wolf Community Response Team experienced a tumultuous year with its organizational and community development efforts. Participation at community meetings was greater than in previous years and several meetings addressing "hot" topics such as community policing were attended by more than 100 vocal participants. Turnover on the board was high and board elections were contentious. New nonprofit organizations sprang up throughout the community.

Consensus building and communication training opportunities were offered to community and board members. Community meetings for discussing restructuring the SWCRT and plans for its future were held. Although several key community leaders failed to participate, progress was made as more low income residents were empowered and became involved in community development efforts.

The strategic plan was updated in 2000 using a highly participatory process with outside facilitators. Project priorities were chosen at a community meeting allowing staff to focus on several projects rather than using a "shot gun" approach and trying to deal with the over 300 activities and projects listed in the overall plan.

During this year of transition and change, barriers preventing several major projects from moving forward were removed. The construction of a fire station for Sunny Valley, which had been started in 1996, moved from a standstill to near completion. Community volunteers were recruited to construct the station and community ownership and pride is at an all time high.

The dream of a community transportation system was realized with the leasing of a small van operating on a dial a ride basis. Funding from state and private funders have paid for much of the operating costs and ridership continues to increase as people become aware of this new service.

The Oregon Parent Center spun off of the SWCRT and became its own nonprofit entity focusing on its preschool and on providing parents with parenting resources, education and support. A local health clinic opened its doors to the community in the past year. Although awareness of this service was slow at first, the clinic is now receiving a great deal of use.

The Wolf Creek Teen Center offered new programs in computer job training and education in 2000. The attendance at the Center has more than doubled and over 90 youth are taking advantage of the Center on a weekly basis. To meet the increasing demand, the Center opened its doors 7 days a week over the past summer.

Community events such as the annual Easter Parade, Hooliween, a community Christmas celebration and lighting festival have been successful partnerships of community groups and participation has grown exponentially. These events are all put on by volunteers.

For every SSBG dollar spent by the SWCRT in 2000, the community was able to leverage \$5 in other funding.

Although the past year seemed chaotic, the foundation was laid within both the SWCRT as an organization and within the Sunny Wolf community for greater positive change and forward momentum in the coming year.